



## Arlington Conservation Commission

**Date:** Thursday, October 5, 2023  
**Time:** 7:00 PM  
**Location:** Conducted by Remote Participation

Please register in advance for this meeting. Reference materials, instructions, and access information for this specific meeting will be available 48 hours prior to the meeting on the Commission's agenda and minutes page. This meeting will be conducted in a remote format consistent with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, which further extends certain COVID-19 measures regarding remote participation in public meetings until March 31, 2025. Please note: Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. This agenda includes those matters which can be reasonably anticipated to be discussed at the meeting.

### Agenda

1. Administrative
  - a. Meeting Minutes.
  - b. Correspondence Received.  
All correspondence is available to the public. For a full list, contact the Conservation Agent at [concomm@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:concomm@town.arlington.ma.us).
2. Discussion
  - a. Enforcement Order: 451 and 455 Mystic Street.
  - b. Thorndike Place Third Party Review.
  - c. Inland Wetland District and Floodplain District Zoning Changes.
  - d. CPA Updates.  
- Mt. Gilboa.
  - e. Water Bodies Working Group.
  - f. Tree Committee Liaison.
  - g. Park & Recreation Commission Liaison.  
- Next meeting of the Park & Recreation Commission to be held on 10/10.



## Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

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### Correspondence Received.

#### Summary:

Correspondence Received.

All correspondence is available to the public. For a full list, contact the Conservation Agent at [concomm@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:concomm@town.arlington.ma.us).

#### ATTACHMENTS:

	Type	File Name	Description
▢	Reference Material	Correspondence_Received_-_Arlington_Great_Meadows_Restoration.pdf	Correspondence Received - Arlington Great Meadows Restoration
▢	Reference Material	Correspondence_Received_-_Thorndike_Place_-_Anna_Yuan.pdf	Correspondence Received - Thorndike Place - Anna Yuan
▢	Reference Material	Correspondence_Received_-_Thorndike_Place_-_Coalition_to_Save_Mugar_Wetlands.pdf	Correspondence Received - Thorndike Place - Coalition to Save Mugar Wetlands
▢	Reference Material	Correspondence_Received_-_Thorndike_Place_-_Peter_Fiore.pdf	Correspondence Received - Thorndike Place - Peter Fiore
▢	Reference Material	Correspondence_Received_-_Thorndike_Place_-_Sarah_Augood.pdf	Correspondence Received - Thorndike Place - Sarah Augood

**Re: Tree removal for meadow restoration. September 2023.**

David White <[dwhite@gilbertwhite.com](mailto:dwhite@gilbertwhite.com)>

Sun 9/24/2023 11:51 AM

To: Kathryn May <[levwells@gmail.com](mailto:levwells@gmail.com)>

Cc: David Morgan <[dmorgan@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:dmorgan@town.arlington.ma.us)>; Susan Chapnick <[s.chapnick@comcast.net](mailto:s.chapnick@comcast.net)>; Holly Samuels <[hollygardendesign@gmail.com](mailto:hollygardendesign@gmail.com)>

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Hi Kate,

We actually need to get the Arlington Conservation Commission in this loop as they are the de facto Town oversight group.

I've copied them in this email.

Perhaps an in-person or a Zoom meeting would get this moving.

David

On 9/24/2023 10:53 AM, Kathryn May wrote:

Hi David,

I have lived on the edge of Great Meadows for many years, watched as trees, brush and invasives swallow up the scenic view. My goal is to gather authorities and volunteers who will restore the meadow at this location in East Lexington. Beyond my yard is a well-used walking path that connects Brandon Street, the Bikepath and Fottler Ave. Further down the slope behind my yard is Mill Brook. I have contacted Holly Samuels, Lexington Conservation, a Mill Brook committee person and Arlington Land Trust. So far, all inquiries lead to your organization. Can you advise me on authorities for permission to remove tallest trees and annual pruning of smaller trees, to maintain a low profile?

I hope to enlist Parterre as a consultant, with help from Lexington folks. Can we talk about splitting the cost of a consultant? I invite you and Arlington Conservation to visit my home and yard as soon as possible, while colors are vivid and before leaves drop. We can walk over to Holly's newly restored paths at the end of Brandon, a big improvement that everyone appreciates.

Happy to talk by phone or text with any questions.

Kate Wells

6 Norton Road. Lexington

781-879-3033

On Thu, Sep 7, 2023 at 11:11 AM David White <[dwhite@gilbertwhite.com](mailto:dwhite@gilbertwhite.com)> wrote:

Hi Kate,

You are on the AGM email list and will receive information about events as we post them.

If you have any other questions please contact me.

Thanks,

David White

Dear Honorable Members of the Arlington Conservation Commission,

I am writing to express my strong objection to Arlington Land Realty's (hereby the Developer) intention to build "Thorndike Place" on the wetland region behind Dorothy Road in East Arlington. The plans to build a large apartment complex and parking garage on one of the last remaining parcels of open land and natural habitat in town, in an area that routinely floods, is environmentally sensitive and densely populated-- is absolutely not suitable for development in a time of rapid climate change.

The East Arlington neighborhood is prone to flooding, and local concerns of neighborhood flooding has been recorded in writing and in photos, including sump pump over-usage at residences near the Project, has been documented for years. Local concerns of flooding are also supported by historical response to the neighborhood from Arlington Fire Department that the flooding occurs more than once a year and that the water table frequently rises. It is well known that other large apartment complexes in the area who have been granted approval to build now experience frequent flooding, e.g., the Vox on 2 apartments on the other side of the wetland region-- and their parking garages are even above ground. It is unethical to build Thorndike Place given the body of evidence that the area is subject to frequent flooding, and the health and safety hazards it poses for current and future residents. The frequency and severity of extreme weather events and rapid climate change are exceeding that of expert projections, so we can only expect that flooding and weather disasters will only exponentially increase (see United Nations IPCC 2022 report). How will this unpredictable, unavoidable, and dramatic increase be accounted for in calculations made today?

The Property currently is densely populated with trees that absorb the water. Given the removal of significant trees and vegetation that absorb water and displacement of earth from the build, how does one know – for certain – that the requirements around this compensatory flood storage will remediate the flooding concerns raised by the Local Community?

Inappropriately building on this location will make flooding and litigation associated with flood damage increase cost for the town of Arlington. There may also be increased costs for maintaining or upgrading the local sewage system and other Arlington town services. In addition, increased flooding may decrease or completely eliminate the use of Thorndike Field for school sports.

Given the Developer's decades of neglect of maintaining the Property, which includes littering of human waste, drugs and drug paraphernalia, and piles of trash, it is clear that the Developers have no interest in environmental concerns. What are the consequences to hold the Developer accountable, and how will they be enforced?

The Developers spent years in public hearings of the Arlington ZBA giving inconsistent and inaccurate measurements of their proposed complex and underground garage and compensatory flood storage plans for an area surrounded by wetlands which routinely

experiences flooding. There has been a pattern of continued lack of transparency from the Developer, who has continued to ignore the environmental concerns of the local community.

I thank the Conservation Commission for your consideration of the issues above and for your dedication to the town of Arlington, both present and future generations.

A. Yuan  
Mott Street, Arlington 02474



October 3, 2023

To Members of the Conservation Commission:

We were pleased to attend the Conservation Commission (Con Comm) hearing on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup> regarding the proposed Thorndike Place development. As members of the Coalition to Save the Mugar Wetlands, we appreciated your questions, comments, and your invitation for public comment.

We would like to raise our concerns about several topics that were briefly discussed during the hearing.

### **1. Trees**

The impact on existing trees and insufficient replacement of trees will affect the neighborhood flooding, tree canopy, noise/pollution from Route 2, carbon dioxide intake, oxygen output, and the habitat for many birds and animals. *We urge the Con Comm, with input from the Town's Tree Warden, to request a complete inventory of existing trees, the number of trees proposed to be removed, how many new trees will be planted, and the maturity and size of those trees.*

### **2. Wildlife**

The developer appeared to minimize the existence of wildlife. It is important to document the diversity of wildlife that inhabits this area. *We ask the Con Comm to request a comprehensive wildlife habitat report, including asking residents to provide sightings with their documentation and photos.*

### **3. Well testing timeframe**

Questions seem to remain regarding the timeframe of the installation of the test pits for the hydrology study. *We ask the Con Comm to confirm that the test pits were installed during the optimal testing period, which we understand would have been early Spring. Documentation should be provided for each testing date and reading.*

### **4. Storm water mitigation**

Neighbors have voiced concerns that existing flooding issues will be exacerbated. The developer provided insufficient information on compensatory flood storage and the impacts this would have on the neighborhood. *The Con Comm needs to request detailed data and a plan for storm water mitigation that also addresses the **expected impacts of climate change**.*

## **5. Vernal pools**

Although a Con Comm member asked about a survey of vernal pools, the developer denied their existence on the site. It is well established that vernal pools are important to wetland ecosystems. *We ask the Con Comm to request a study to identify any vernal pools within the site and document the ways that the proposed development might affect them.*

## **6. Land grade**

An important topic not discussed at the hearing is the current land grade and how the development might alter it. *We ask the Con Comm to request the developer provide certified engineered plot plans showing grading, elevations, and contours for both pre-existing conditions and the proposed completed project.*

## **7. Proposed conservation parcel**

The conservation restricted parcel that the developer has designated for the Town currently contains invasives, dead trees, trash, the remains of homeless encampments, and potentially toxic waste. This area would need to be cleaned and cleared prior to the transfer to the Town and sufficient funds allocated for continued maintenance. *We ask the Con Comm to request the developer provide a detailed plan to address these concerns.*

## **8. Meeting with the neighbors**

The neighbors have valuable information to share regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed development. We will be meeting with the Town Manager and Select Board members at an upcoming site visit to the property. We strongly encourage Con Comm members to attend.

In conclusion, the proposed Thorndike Place development prioritizes housing for older and low-income adults. However, given the development site is prone to flooding, this drastically conflicts with goals of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) 2.0 Program that Gov. Healey recently approved for Arlington; specifically protecting vulnerable populations (i.e., older and low-income adults) from the effects of climate change. We encourage the Con Comm to take these factors into consideration.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters on Behalf of the Coalition to Save the Mugar Wetlands,

Jeanette Cummings, 32 Dorothy Rd.

Julie DiBiase, 29 Littlejohn St.

Lisa Fredman, 63 Mott St.

Cc: James Feeney, Arlington Town Manager  
David Morgan, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent  
Arlington Select Board  
Arlington Land Trust  
Arlington Tree Committee  
Community Preservation Committee



## Thorndike Place - Mugar property

Peter Fiore <fiorepe@hotmail.com>

Thu 9/21/2023 11:14 AM

To: ConComm <ConComm@town.arlington.ma.us>

 2 attachments (2 MB)

20221025\_173005.jpg; VideoCapture\_20221117-092717.jpg;

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Dear Members of the Conservation Commision,

Please accept these comments regarding the Mugar - Thorndike place development.

The bicycle tires and bicycle frames as well as shopping carts shown in photographs in the Thorndike Place developers report to the Commission were put there by the unhoused people the property owner allowed to live there for many years. As such, what the developer refers to as dumping was a self-created hardship.

There are several acres of trees that are to the west of the development that are part of the Mugar property. They are not part of the development and will not be under the conservation restriction. This is concerning. No reference that I could find in the report (that I did my best to read and comprehend) acknowledges the connection of these acres to the wildlife in them and the environmental connection of this acreage to the Alewife reservation for the wildlife that has territory that encompasses both. The Mugar property does not exist in environmental isolation or an environmental vacuum.

Please note the attached photographs of a Barred Owl that I have seen from my kitchen window in my yard and in the Mugar property.

Thank you,  
Peter Fiore  
58 Mott Street

## Mugar development

Sarah Augood <sja6373@gmail.com>

Tue 9/19/2023 8:45 PM

To: ConComm <ConComm@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: Sarah Augood <sja6373@gmail.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello,

Please find below my comments and questions for 9/21 meeting.

Given the environmental sensitivity of the Mugar wetlands and the potential devastating increase in flooding in the abutting neighborhood, could the Committee please explore:

- total number and size of trees to be removed during construction,
- the potential loss of water consumption by said trees based on established norms, say 10G/day/inch of tree radius, and thus increase in water in East Arlington,
- Estimated length of construction project without any water absorbing trees, and finally,
- number and size of trees to be replanted. The net difference in water consumption should be factored in to increased flood-risk for local community.
- will developer be held accountable for damage to neighboring properties due to potential increase in flood water during and after construction, and if so for 5-10 yrs?

Mature trees in the Mugar area act as a sponge, and thus immediate loss of said trees during and after construction will have a significant impact on water table in this area and abutting neighborhoods.

- can developers confirm that no poisons or chemicals will be used in pest management so as to protect the local wildlife (owls, hawks, coyotes etc) and local pet (cats and dogs) populations that hunt mice and rodents in the neighborhood.

Thanking you for your consideration of above comments,

Best,

Sarah Augood,

Dorothy Rd resident.



## Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

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### Water Bodies Working Group.

#### Summary:

Water Bodies Working Group.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

	Type	File Name	Description
▢	Reference Material	WB_WG_Notes_-_9_21_23_.pdf	WBWG Notes, 9.21.23

## **Water Bodies Working Group Notes - 9/21/23 - DRAFT 10/2/23**

**Present:** David Morgan, David White, Brad Barber, Ellen Reed, Pat Martin (AHD)

**Regrets:** David Kaplan, Carolyn White, Natasha Waden

1. **Meeting dates** - Some people could not attend tonight because the date was moved from the second to the third Thursday. We should try to keep a consistent date for this meeting so that everyone can attend. We will try to keep to the second Thursday at 6:00 for the present. Note also that Carolyn White can not attend on Thursdays because of her work so we may need to look at other possible meeting times in the future.
2. **Spy Pond**
  - a. We discussed the role of the Spy Pond Committee in managing the pond. We felt that the information that they provide (pond level, plant reports. etc.) is very valuable. It really goes beyond what we can expect a consultant to do.
  - b. Permitting issues - Concern was expressed about getting timely permission for treatment this spring. Also about the delay in pursuing the Phragmites treatment.
  - c. We want to request MassDOT to extend the wire cage for the outfall structure.
  - d. The Vortex structure needs cleaning and that needs to be brought to DPW.
3. **Hills Pond**
  - a. Trap not working?
  - b. W&W coming next week to inspect and test and treat for phosphorus.
  - c. So much rain this year may have overwhelmed the P. traps.
  - d. Keep the aerator on until first frost, and then turn off for ice skating.
  - e. Grass clippings from mowing have blown into the pond. May be inadvertent but we need to limit nutrient loading.
4. **Res**
  - a. Although the June mechanical harvesting was very successful, new water chestnut plants kept reappearing during the summer. The Mystic River Watershed Association organized a number of volunteer hand harvesting events that have been very successful in controlling the new growth.
  - b. The water level has now been lowered after the Beach season and the mud flats have reappeared along with many more birds.
5. **McClennen**
  - a. Water level - The water level in the detention ponds seems a little high. It should be going down over time to provide more stormwater capacity. Something for DPW to look into.
  - b. Buffer zone - David Morgan has come up with a plan to truly establish a vegetated buffer zone around the ponds. He spoke with Mike Rademacher and Joe Connelly and they agreed to reestablish the buffer zone around the detention ponds. The no-mow zone will begin 10' off the paths and fencing all the way around the ponds. One or more access points will be mowed, too. The Conservation Commission should seek funding from Arlington Land Trust to establish no-mow zone markers like those at Hurd Field.

- c. Dredging - The ponds should probably be dredged periodically so as to maintain flood storage capacity. Something else for DPW.

#### **6. Alewife Brook**

- a. Combined sewer overflows have continued in this very rainy summer. Twice contaminated water has overflowed the banks and flooded onto the Alewife Greenway public path.

#### **7. Other**

- a. We talked about an update of the 2007 baseline pond report by Aquatic Control Technologies but came to no decision.
- b. Management Goals - We talked about how having formal management goals for each water body would help guide our efforts and also support funding efforts. An outline of such a plan is provided below for Spy Pond.

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### **Example of Management Goals - Spy Pond**

#### Overall Public Goals

- Open water environment for general enjoyment, boating and fishing.
- Healthy for fish and wildlife.

#### Management Goals

- Control of invasive aquatic plants and hazardous algae.
- Control/management of excessive nutrients.
- Minimize use of chemicals harmful to native plants and wildlife.
- Maintain target water level at 40 cm (?) but adjust as needed for other reasons.
- Enhance aquatic native plant populations

#### Management Actions

- Regular monitoring of conditions.
- Control of detrimental invasive plants with chemical or mechanical means.
- Minimal use of chemicals so as not to affect fish, wildlife and native plants.
- Shoreline runoff and vegetation control.
- Other ...